

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated April 3, 2007 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

By this response, claims 28-31 are currently amended. Claim 32 is hereby added. No new matter is added. Claims 1-11 have been withdrawn from consideration. Accordingly, claims 1-32 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 28, 29 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,805,330 to Byker et al. (hereinafter “Byker”). Claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Byker in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,498,663 to Cantrill (hereinafter “Cantrill”). Claims 12-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Byker in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,207,519 to Joffe et al. (hereinafter “Joffe”) and Cantrill.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 12-19 and 24 and reconsideration is requested. Claim 12-19 and 24 are allowable over the cited prior art at least in that each of these claims recites a combination of elements, including, for example, “providing a suction force applying means within each passage for transmitting a suction force a predetermined distance from the contact surface”. None of the cited references, including, Byker, Joffe and Cantrill, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. In particular, Byker merely discloses that glass elements may be secured by the vacuum-applying members 50 and 52 as shown in Fig. 4. Joffe merely discloses suction cups 302 coming into contact with the upper side of an upper glass plate 306 (col. 18 lines 11-20). Cantrill merely discloses an apertured vacuum holding surface having a pair of separate vacuum supply lines. Accordingly, Byker, Joffe and Cantrill, singly or in combination, do not teach or suggest “providing a suction force applying means within each passage for transmitting a suction force a predetermined distance from the contact surface”. Therefore, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 12-19 and 24.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 20-23 and 25-27 and reconsideration is requested. Claims 20-23 are allowable over the cited prior art at least in that each of these claims recites a combination of elements, including, for example, “transmitting the generated suction force to an application point at a predetermined distance away from the contact surface of the upper stage”. None of the cited references, including, Byker, Joffe and Cantrill, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. In particular, Byker merely discloses that glass elements may be secured by the vacuum-applying members 50 and 52 as shown in Fig. 4. Joffe merely discloses suction cups 302 coming into contact with the upper side of an upper glass plate 306 (col. 18 lines 11-20). Cantrill merely discloses an apertured vacuum holding surface having a pair of separate vacuum supply lines. Accordingly, Byker, Joffe and Cantrill, singly or in combination, do not teach or suggest “transmitting the generated suction force to an application point at a predetermined distance away from the contact surface of the upper stage”. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 20-23 and 25-27.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of claim 28-31 and reconsideration is requested. Claims 28-31 are allowable over the cited prior art at least in that each of these claims recites a combination of elements, including, for example, “providing a first suction applicator within a first passage for transmitting a suction force from the contact surface a predetermined distance from the contact surface”. None of the cited references, including, Byker, Joffe and Cantrill, singly or in combination, teaches or suggest at least this feature of the claimed invention. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 28-31.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance and therefore requests favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: July 3, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By

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